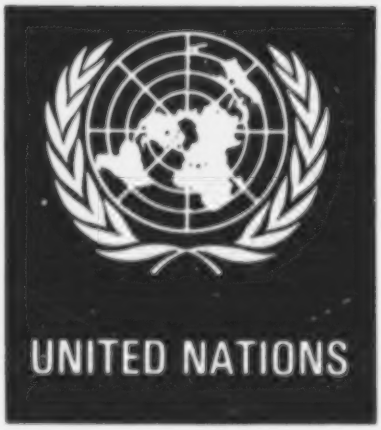

DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

**TENTH UNITED NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

**Austria Center, Vienna, Austria
25 - 27 August 1993**

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the Austria Center, Vienna, Austria from 25 to 27 August 1993. The meeting was convened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 B.

2. The Meeting was attended by representatives of 79 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) six of which attended as observers. It was also attended by several observers from Governments, an intergovernmental organization, United Nations specialized agencies, bodies and programmes, and Palestine (see annex IV below).

3. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of H. E. M. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; H. E. Sr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba), Vice-Chairman; H. E. Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; H. E. Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and H. E. Dr. M. Nasser Al Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine.

4. The programme for the Meeting was elaborated by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in consultation with the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP). Its main theme was "Renewing the United Nations NGO Commitment to Palestinian National and Human Rights".

5. Five panels were held during which nineteen panellists made presentations. On Panel 1, entitled "Political Update: Obstacles to Peace", presentations were made by the following experts:

Mr. Haider Abdel Shafi (Palestinian),
Ms. Naomi Chazan (Israel), and Mr. Naseer Aruri (United States).

6. On Panel 2, entitled "Urgent Quest for Independence: Protection and End of Occupation", presentations were made by Mr. Pablo de la Vega (Ecuador), Mr. Raji Sourani (Palestinian), Mr. Avigdor Feldman (Israel), Mr. Mohammed Ali Taha (Israel), and Mr. Hussein Abu Hussein (Israel).

7. On Panel 3, entitled "Back to the Future - A Decade of United Nations NGO Networking", presentations were made by
Mr. Jean Marie Lambert (France), Ms. Adrien Wing (United States), Mr. Romesh Chandra (India), Mr. Hans-Peter Kotthaus (UNRWA) and Mr. Akira Uriu (UNIDO).

8. On Panel 4, entitled "NGO Forum: Who is doing what?", presentations were made by Mrs. Samiha Khalil (Palestinian),
Mr. Fritz Froehlich (Austria), Mrs. Ruth Cohen (Israel), and
Mr. Jim Graff (Canada).

9. On Panel 5, entitled "Future Strategies and the Role of NGOs", presentations were made by Mr. Don Betz (United States) and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestinian).

10. The NGOs participating in the Meeting adopted a final declaration as well as a plan of action. (See annexes I and II below).

A. Opening statements

11. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Kebá Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

12. H.E. Mr. Wolfgang Wolte, Deputy-Secretary-General and Director-General for European Integration and Economic Policy in the Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, conveyed his Government's willingness to contribute actively to the multilateral negotiations, especially in the fields of water, regional economic development and refugees, where it could offer its experience and expertise.

13. Austria firmly believed in the existence of a workable solution based on the acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and on the commonly accepted principle "land for peace", the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the right of all States in the region to exist within safe and secure boundaries.

14. In conclusion, he affirmed that his country highly valued the role of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and that of the NGOs in underscoring and furthering, on a worldwide basis, the sense of urgency required to promote the cause of peace in the Middle East.

15. A message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations was delivered by his representative Mr. Johan Nordenfelt, Director, Programmes Against Apartheid and for Palestinian Rights, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations, New York. (See Annex II below).

16. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, H.E. M. Kéba Birane Cissé stated that the General Assembly had always underscored the pressing need to find a just, lasting, and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core issue, the question of Palestine. He noted that it was gratifying to see that the Arab-Israeli negotiations had become a reality, although the road ahead was bumpy and difficult. It was regrettable that after 22 months of negotiations, real progress had yet to be made in this effort.

17. He stressed that it was of paramount importance for the international community to help the Palestinians salvage their economy, which had been dependent on, if not totally subsumed by, the highly developed and technologically advanced Israeli economy.

18. He observed that the Palestinians had for many years been living in squalid conditions while their land, water, and property were taken away by the occupation authorities, their houses, olive groves and crops destroyed. The plight of the

Palestinians had been further exacerbated by the closure of the occupied territory, a measure which had imposed a virtual state of siege on the Palestinian people under occupation, drastically limiting their access to schools, places of worship in Jerusalem, much-needed hospital facilities, and utility services.

19. A message from **H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat**, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization was read out by Mr. Faisal Aweidah, Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations Office and other United Nations agencies in Vienna and Ambassador to the Republic of Austria. (See annex III below).

20. **Mr. Donald Betz**, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP), said that the establishment of the Office of the ICCP in Geneva during 1986, ushered in a new phase of accelerated NGO activity and an unprecedented outreach. The impact of the intifadah and the availability of fax machines stimulated the growth of the NGO network and the relative importance of the ICCP as a coordinating mechanism.

21. He asked the participants to reflect on NGO accomplishments over the past ten years as a movement, to evaluate their effectiveness and to determine what fresh strategies should be developed to achieve common objectives. He added that the accomplishments had been a testimony to the "phenomenal ability of ordinary people to accomplish the extraordinary with virtually no resources."

22. In the next ten years the NGO movement on the question of Palestine would shift focus from self-determination and human rights to include economic and human development. He expressed the hope that the NGO cooperation with the United Nations would broaden and diversify in the future with more organizations joining the common effort of building a new State of Palestine.

23. **H. E. Mr. Abdelaziz Aboughoosh**, Ambassador and Director of the Department of Palestine and Al-Quds, and Representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, stated that the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict had passed very critical and difficult stages and that little progress had been achieved in the peace process.

24. He attributed the slow progress in the peace process to what he characterized as Israel's intransigence and refusal to implement United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict and its continued denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.

25. All the Islamic conferences had emphasized that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East could only be achieved by the complete Israeli withdrawal from all Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. In addition, the Palestinian people would have to exercise the right to self-determination in their own state with Jerusalem as its capital under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole legitimate representative.

26. The international community had a fundamental role in the achievement of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East which in turn was an essential factor to the achievement of international peace, security and stability.

B. Panel discussions

Panel 1: "Political Update: Obstacles to Peace"

27. **Mr. Haider Abdel Shafi (Palestinian)**, Chairman of the Red Crescent Society in the Gaza Strip and Head of the Palestinian Negotiating Delegation to the Peace Process, said that the obstacles to the peace process stemmed from the United Nations Security Council when it failed to establish that the 1967 war was a war of aggression and not one of defence. He faulted the Government of the United States and the world community for their failure to force Israel to withdraw from the territory occupied in 1967 and to end the annexation of Jerusalem.

28. Although the United States had determined that new settlements in the occupied territories were an obstacle to peace, the Bush Administration had continued to help Israel with material and financial support and in his view that policy was a "scandal".

29. Israel had indoctrinated its population into believing that the occupied territories were Israeli territory. The Israeli leadership was, therefore, now faced with the predicament of having to reverse itself after 26 years by informing the people of Israel that the settlements were illegal and one of the formidable obstacles to peace. Furthermore, Israel intended to legitimize these illegal acts through the peace process. Israel had, therefore, entered the peace process with reservations and against its better judgement. Israel's refusal to accept Security Council resolution 242 was not helpful to the peace process.

30. The continued Israeli settlement policy, especially in Jerusalem and the offensive and brutal attitude towards the Palestinians in the occupied territories did not lend any credibility to the peace process. He also believed that he present Israeli Government, the Labour Government, was interested in reaching a peace settlement on its own terms. Such a peace would not endure. Peace must be based on fairness and justice.

31. On the other hand, for their part, the Palestinians had been trying with all seriousness and sincerity, since the Palestine National Council had adopted the peace initiative in November 1988, to reach an accord with Israel that would result in a peace settlement.

32. The Palestinians intended to achieve that goal without the abandonment of their right to self-determination and an independent existence. A call for additional compromises by the Palestinian side was unacceptable. The Palestinians had demonstrated flexibility. Unless all these efforts were recognized, peace would remain elusive.

33. **Ms. Naomi Chazan** (Israel), said the peace effort regarding the question of Palestine was at a crucial
juncture. There had been considerable movement in the peace process although the situation on the ground had deteriorated.

34. A just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict had to be based on the recognition of the Palestinian right to self determination, creation of the State of Palestine alongside Israel, termination of the Israeli occupation, direct negotiation between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and agreements that took into account the interests and concerns of all parties involved. She warned that both sides had extremists who were most consistent in their opposition to peace.

35. There was no alternative to a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Labour Party-led coalition, a very fragile coalition, was the most peace-oriented government in the history of the State of Israel. Decision making was extremely hierarchical, hesitant and uncertain. The new Government had a policy of cessation of new settlements but supported the presence of existing ones.

36. The deterioration of conditions on the ground, the continuing violation of human rights and the December 1992 deportations were obstacles. Respect for human rights could not exist without the recognition and realization by Israeli public opinion that the Palestine Liberation Organization was the key and most moderate negotiation party, which had removed another obstacle to peace. Furthermore, the acceptance of a "land for peace" strategy was also another positive factor. The negotiations should result in the exercise of the rights of self-determination by the Palestinian people and the establishment of a Palestinian state based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

37. **Mr. Nasser Aruri** (United States of America), Professor of Political Sciences, Southeastern Massachusetts University, said that a quarter century of United States opposition to a Middle East settlement based on an end to Israeli occupation and the beginning of Palestinian statehood, as well as Israeli rejection of every United States initiative involving a territorial settlement, had been major impediments to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

38. Further to the Gulf War and the erosion of Arab solidarity on Palestine, the replacement of the international peace conference, called for in Security Council resolution 338, with a regional conference hosted by the United States and the Russian Federation had diminished the importance of Security Council resolution 242, and had rendered a 45-year long legal record, enshrined in countless United Nations resolutions, virtually irrelevant to the framework of the negotiations.

39. The plan outlined in the Israeli document entitled "Ideals for Peaceful Coexistence in the Territories during the Interim Period" ruled out the creation of a central Palestinian authority, made no provisions for a geographical space, independent economic planning, judicial review, legislative authority and control over sovereign affairs, defence or natural resources. In spite of all the many shortcomings in the current peace process, the presence of the Palestinians at all the negotiating rounds, under exceedingly prejudicial terms, underscores the Palestinian genuine desire for peace.

Panel 2: "Urgent Quest for Independence: Protection and End of Occupation"

40. **Mr. Pablo de la Vega** (Ecuador), co-founder of the Ecuadorian chapters of Amnesty International and Defense for Children International (DCI) said that the participation of the Latin American non-governmental organizations in such forums was of major significance to them, as it enabled them to make known their point of view, which he said had been frequently undervalued.

41. He stressed that the world's attention had to be urgently drawn to the plight of the Palestinian people living under Israeli military occupation. The systematic violation of their human rights demanded a pragmatic response by the international community. The implementation of protective mechanisms should be considered, such as the presence of special United Nations forces.

42. The direct relationship between the establishment of new settlements and the eviction of the Arab population posed a threat to the survival of the Palestinian people and undermined the current peace process. One of the most effective means to guarantee the protection of the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank lay in the hands of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, particularly under article 1.

43. **Mr. Raji Sourani** (Palestinian), Director, Gaza Center for Rights and Law warned that international complacency at a time when the human rights situation in the occupied territories was rapidly deteriorating was a serious cause for alarm. The number of Palestinians killed or injured by the Israeli security forces had risen to unprecedented levels during the first year of the Rabin Government. He added that a large number of those killed were minors with more than thirty per cent being under ten years of age.

44. The international community should take steps that would ensure respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people. The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention must, in accordance with their obligations under Article 1, ensure respect by Israel of its obligations under the Convention as an occupying power. He also observed that after 26 years, Israel was alone in insisting that the Fourth Geneva Convention did not apply to the territories it had occupied since 1967.

45. Israel regarded the Gaza Strip as a labour reservoir and had prevented the development of the infrastructure of the occupied territories by placing restrictions on the freedom of movement of persons and capital and on the use of land including restrictions on financial transactions and access to external markets.

46. He called for the implementation of Security Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990 which had requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to monitor and observe the situation of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation and to report on the first week of March 1991 and every four months thereafter. He then referred to Security Council resolution 799 (1992) of 18 December 1992 which had demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied territories of all those who had been deported. The resolution had also

requested the dispatch of a representative of the Secretary-General to consult with the Israeli Government with regard to that serious situation and report to the Security Council.

47. Mr. Avigdor Feldman (Israel), a human rights advocate from Israel, called upon the United Nations, as the organizer of the International NGO Meeting, to take upon itself the task of assessing Israel's civil society during the period it had occupied the West Bank and Gaza. He observed that Israel had developed a fascinating dichotomy of the coexistence of a democratic regime alongside an oppressive one under the same administrative and legal authority. In a democratic civil society NGOs were expected to serve as monitors and a buffer that prevented the national deterioration of the society through oppression of others.

48. In light of the continued occupation, he had on occasion entertained doubts regarding the independence of the Israeli legal system, whether it acted as an organ of the state or of the civil society. The courts' proper role was one of shielding the citizen against oppression and arbitrariness of the government.

49. There was no written research on Israeli courts and their decisions regarding the occupied territories. Furthermore, there appeared to be no information available on the holding of Palestinian detainees without trial and whether that action was contrary to international and Israeli law.

50. The failure of Israel's legal system during the occupation was a partial expression of the general failure of its civil society. He expressed the hope that the Palestinian community, which was in the preliminary stages of formulating its own civil society in the occupied territories, would learn from the Israeli experience and create a society that would stand firm against all state oppression.

51. Mr. Mohammed Ali Taha (Israel), Secretary, Association of Arab Writers in Israel, said that the Israeli occupation forces had murdered hundreds of Palestinians since the beginning of the intifadah and thousands of children had become crippled. He reported that according to official Israeli estimates, 1,506 Palestinians had died from the beginning of the intifadah up to July 1993. In addition, approximately 100,000 had been wounded, although a large number of wounded had never sought medical assistance for fear of being arrested or tortured. Also during that period 426 houses had been demolished and 486 persons deported.

52. Palestinian children were among those who suffered the most in the occupied territories. Nearly 232 children had lost their lives from the beginning of the intifadah until June 1993 and 38 of them were killed during the first half of 1993. Data provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) showed that every fifth male child in the Gaza Strip had been wounded and the total number of children wounded was 22,757. Reports indicated that more than half of them had been wounded as a result of being beaten or shot by Israeli forces.

53. He called for the protection of the Palestinian population from attacks on life and physical safety, from disablement and from physical and psychological torture. He also called for the protection of the right of ownership and the prohibition of the

confiscation of property, protection of cultural and religious institutions, protection of the natural resources and the protection and return of antiquities that had been looted.

54. **Mr. Hussein Abu Hussein** (Israel), an advocate, outlined the history of systematic discrimination by Israel against Arabs living within its borders. He said that the policy of discrimination against Arabs was directly related to the Jewish nature of the State of Israel, and to the way in which the Israeli Constitution had been written. Arabs did not have the right to adequate representation under Israeli law.

55. Israel was a Zionist State built on the ruins of the Palestinian people; in Israel, there were two communities, Jewish and non-Jewish. Jews had national rights, others did not.

56. He said that the international community, through the United Nations system, should undertake measures to encourage Israel to recognize its Arab community as full citizens with legal rights.

57. The upper limit of the solution of the Palestine question proposed by the Arabs was the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel with its 1948 borders.

58. In conclusion, he observed that Arabs in Israel were at times considered strangers in the land of their fathers and forefathers while at other times they were considered to be citizens, albeit of a lower status. He also pondered whether the position of the Arab citizens of Israel would not be better served through population exchanges between Israel and the Palestinian state, whereby the Arab citizens of Israel would be transferred to the Palestinian state and the Jewish settlers in the occupied territories would be returned to Israel.

Panel 3: "Back to the Future - A Decade of United Nations NGO Networking"

59. **Mr. Jean Marie Lambert** (France), of the Association Medicale Franco-Palestinienne, said that despite all the actions taken by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in their contacts with United Nations bodies, and despite the endeavours of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine to bring the Palestinian cause to the attention of the international, regional and national public, many questions remained unresolved.

60. Among the important outstanding issues were self-determination, implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, a halt to further settlement building in the occupied territories, the ending of repression and deportation, and the deployment of a United Nations buffer force to protect the Palestinian population. Because the resolutions of the Security Council had not been enforced, the United Nations had lost credibility and consequently the many and repetitive NGO declarations were ineffectual.

61. It was his view that NGOs expended too much effort on final declarations whose effective life-span did not extend beyond the meetings.

62. **Ms. Adrien Wing** (United States of America), Chairperson of the International Section of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, outlined the role that had been played by lawyers globally in the area of international human rights, including Palestinian rights. In this connection, emphasis had been placed on the implementation of international legal norms to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their sovereign and inalienable rights as found in numerous international documents including the Hague and Geneva Conventions, the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, among others.

63. International fact-finding missions to the occupied territories had been conducted by lawyers whose reports had been circulated internationally to governments and NGOs to assist them in their deliberations.

64. She hoped that in the future more "mainstream" lawyers, law students and new lawyers, who are searching for ways to express their yearning for public interest work, would be attracted to serve in the NGOs dealing with legal matters and become involved in the movement in support of Palestinian national and human rights.

65. In conclusion, she observed that NGOs concerned with legal affairs had played a small but vital role in the past decade with respect to the Palestinian struggle and expressed her firm belief that they would and should play such a role in the near future and in the ultimate future of the State of Palestine.

66. **Mr. Hans Peter Kotthaus**, Chief, External Relations Office, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Vienna, said that since its inception in 1950 UNRWA has cooperated with both local and international NGOs in providing assistance to Palestine refugees. UNRWA cooperates with more than 50 national and international NGOs and some 250 local NGOs in the medical, humanitarian, human rights and development-oriented areas.

67. UNRWA, through a quasi-governmental set of institutions, has been providing basic services in education, health care, and welfare for the destitute. NGOs on the other hand have pioneered work in such areas as assistance to the disabled and community self-help programmes, other specific programmes and emergency situations. UNRWA has often utilized NGOs to carry out emergency projects. The bulk of UNRWA's collaboration with NGOs takes place within the context of its three regular programmes namely, relief and social services, health and education.

68. On relief and social services UNRWA works with a wide range of national and international NGOs such as OXFAM, the Near East Foundation, Norwegian People's Aid, Cooperation for Development (CD).

69. UNRWA's health department cooperates with organizations such as Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAD), United Kingdom, Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad (APHEDA) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

70. With reference to education, UNRWA's Department of Education while establishing contacts with local NGOs has maintained cooperation with a number of national and international organizations including ARAMCO, AUSTCARE, the National Federation of UNESCO Associations of Japan (NFUAJ), Rädda Bärnen, Rissho Kosei-Kai Fund, Vluchtelling (Netherlands Refugee Foundation) and the YMCA.

71. Cooperation between UNRWA and the NGOs is particularly important in the occupied Palestinian territory and in Lebanon where the Agency runs an emergency programme in extra food aid and medical services through EMLOT (Emergency Measures in Lebanon and the Occupied Territory).

72. Some of the joint ventures between UNRWA and NGOs include the distribution of food rations, medical treatment and physiotherapy, training of ambulance drivers and teachers, reading programmes and education in Arabic and mathematics, training programmes for the disabled and youth, environmental programmes - sewage disposal, agriculture, programmes for women and the development of income generating projects. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA had expressed the hope for continued cooperation, new contacts and the launching of further initiatives with NGOs.

73. **Mr. Romesh Chandra** (India), Honourary President of the World Peace Council, said that the United Nations had a long record of furthering the rights of the Palestinian people, in particular through the General Assembly resolutions on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the role played by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

74. Although the Committee's recommendations were endorsed by the Assembly, a veto by the United States had prevented their acceptance by the Security Council and the adoption of many resolutions condemning Israeli violations of Palestinian rights.

75. He said that over the years, the work of non-governmental organizations, in solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle for national and human rights, had supplemented that of the United Nations. NGOs had supported the positive United Nations efforts for peace and justice for the Palestinian people while calling for more effective action by the United Nations.

76. The annual international NGO meeting on the question of Palestine had given a fresh impetus to cooperation between the United Nations and NGOs and had provided a forum for a valuable exchange between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli peace forces. He noted that the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) in cooperation with some of the regional and continental coordinating committees had developed a worldwide networking system. The work of the NGO coordinating committees in North America, Europe and Israel had been of special importance. Many other NGOs had taken part in actions in solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

77. **Mr. Akira Uriu**, Senior Area Programme Officer and Focal Point for Technical Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNIDO, stated that sound and sustainable economic and social development could not be achieved without securing national and human rights.

78. UNIDO had carried out its assistance to the Palestinian people with limited financial resources, staff shortages, bureaucratic requirements and political constraints by employing flexibility and unconventional approaches, similarly to the NGOs.

79. Through the ILO Turin Centre, UNIDO had arranged for two training workshops for entrepreneurs of small industries in the occupied territories. Having obtained access to the occupied territories in 1992, UNIDO would hold a similar workshop in November 1993 in Vienna. The agency had also increased its cooperation with UNDP. Unfortunately, the current financial crisis coupled with staff reductions prevented UNIDO from doing more for the Palestinian cause.

80. Given those constraints which also affected other members of the United Nations family, a pulling together of experience and human and financial resources would lead to the achievement of better results.

81. It was common knowledge that the industrial sector of the occupied territories had stagnated. In that regard self-determination remained a key issue. Furthermore, the industrial development of a Palestinian state would require billions of dollars. To obtain such amounts, national economic and social infrastructures and institutions were needed and large-scale investments from the private sector would be required. In this connection, other institutions like UNIDO could act as facilitators as UNIDO did through its Investment Promotion Programme and network.

82. In conclusion, he observed that the next decade would require an expanded NGO network and a new relationship with the United Nations system.

Panel 4: "NGO Forum: Who is doing what?"

83. **Ms. Samiha Khalil** (Palestinian), President, Society of In'Ash El-Usra, said that, although the Palestinian people had utilized all methods of struggle and had appealed through statements and protests to all States, the United Nations and human rights institutions, all was to no avail. Instead land confiscation, plundering and usurpation of homes, uprooting of trees, arrest and torture of thousands, expulsions and desecration of holy shrines had continued unabated.

84. Bilateral and multilateral talks had not advanced the cause of peace. In the final analysis it had become evident to the Palestinian people that the United States had worked only for the sake of its own interest and that of Israel.

85. The United States had employed great efforts to fulfil Israel's goals and had offered it great support in arms and equipment, giving Israel an edge over all Arab States combined. Moreover, the United States had manoeuvred to sidestep the international resolutions that dealt with the national and human rights of the Palestinian people as it had done with Security Council resolution 799 (1992) regarding the expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians to Lebanon in December of 1993.

86. In the absence of a national authority, Palestinian women had established societies and institutions to assist children, prisoners, the disabled and those whose houses had been dynamited and whose trees had been uprooted. They had established

schools, institutions and universities, hospitals, clinics, day-care centres and kindergartens.

87. She deplored that after nearly two years of bilateral and multilateral talks, the Palestinian cause had not yet advanced and was restricted to procedural arguments. She called upon NGOs to exert pressure on the United Nations to implement its resolutions by condemning the acquisition of land by force and calling for the implementation of international conventions.

88. Mr. Fritz Froehlich (Austria), Network of European NGOs in the Occupied Territories (NENGOOT), said that international and European NGO involvement in the occupied Palestinian territories was considerable but inconsistent. Over one third of international and European NGOs were church-related or affiliated. The various assistance programmes were not always properly structured, evaluated nor monitored. Often, cooperation between donors and recipients were based on personal relationships and lacked professionalism.

89. Obstacles to the development and delivery of assistance programmes included the denial of permits to and restrictions on the movement of NGOs in the occupied Palestinian territories, inequitable distribution of funds and the financial dependency of the NGOs on governmental foreign aid.

90. Several organizations had been formed to coordinate the work of the international NGOs, including AIVA, Association of International Volunteer Agencies (Jerusalem); CCINGO, Coordinating Committee of International NGOs in the Occupied Territories (Jerusalem) and NENGOOT; ECCP, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (Brussels) and ICCP, International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (Geneva). The first three organizations AIVA, CCINGO AND NENGOOT addressed matters more related to relief, rehabilitation and development programmes in the occupied Palestinian territory. The ECCP and the ICCP working in cooperation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had emphasized mobilization of support for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

91. In conclusion, he recommended the adoption of an NGO Development Code of Practice (DCOP), as originally proposed by the ECCP-NENGOOT, that could include development strategies, methods, monitoring, documentation and evaluations.

92. Ms. Ruth Cohen (Israel), Member, Association of Women for Peace, said that the Israeli peace movement had been inactive and despondent. Although not in agreement with the negotiating positions in the peace process of the current Israeli coalition Government, the Peace Now mcvement was obliged to support the Government.

93. She referred to a new group "Gush Hashalom" (the Peace Block) within the Israeli peace movement, which believed in the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, direct negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization, withdrawal from all territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem, withdrawal from South Lebanon and total equality between Jews and Arabs within Israel.

94. She concluded that in her view the Peace Now movement ought to oppose the policies of the Rabin Government as if there were no peace negotiations and also be opposed to the Israeli position in the peace negotiations as if there was no Rabin Government.

95. **Mr. James Graff** (Canada), President, Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada, said that in 1989, almost every country in the world had voted for a United Nations-sponsored international peace conference on the Middle East. Momentum had grown throughout Europe and among United States allies to free Palestine from 22 years of Israeli colonization and oppression.

96. Since then, the momentum for Palestinian statehood had sustained several shocks, among them, the Gulf crisis and war with its disastrous consequences for Palestinians and for the Palestine Liberation Organization; the initiation of a United States orchestrated peace process biased towards United States and Israeli objectives in the Middle East, and which ignored the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions and principles, while also excluding Europe from any significant role; and the election of a new United States Administration which in Mr. Graff's view was more sympathetic to Israel than the preceding ones.

97. He observed that the international NGO movement was threatened with dissolution because of the financial crisis that had forced the ICCP office in Geneva to cease functioning.

98. He urged the international community to continue to press for an independent secular, democratic Palestinian state in the occupied territories with Jerusalem as its capital unless the Palestinian community through its leadership determined otherwise.

99. Furthermore, he did not believe that it was for the NGO movement to decide whether the Palestinians should participate or not in the current peace process. A major focus on promoting government involvement in the development of economic infrastructures in the occupied territories was needed. In addition, special assistance was also required with the educational, social and psychological needs of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Throughout this process the expertise of the various Palestinian technical committees should be fully utilized.

Panel 5: "Future Strategies and the Role of NGOs"

100. **Mr. Don Betz** (United States of America), Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine said that the priorities for the second decade of the NGO movement on the question of Palestine should pivot on the twin axes of Palestinian national identity and development. NGOs served the cause of Palestinian national identity by continuing to counter the endless campaigns designed to discredit Palestinian aspirations, thereby thwarting their attempts to secure their national rights. Although the NGOs had achieved some successes in that regard an unqualified victory could not be claimed.

101. Over the last decade knowledge of the struggle of the Palestinian people had reached many people. Similarly, the coalition mobilized to act on behalf of the Palestinian people for its rights as a people and as a nation had increased immensely.

102. Improved cooperation and coordination was needed in NGO to NGO relationships, NGO interaction with the various bodies within the United Nations and the establishment of linkages between non-Palestinian NGOs with their Palestinian counterparts.

103. It was essential that the NGOs function as a network to achieve common objectives. it was equally important that NGOs with experience in working successfully within the United Nations system share that experience with the Palestinian NGOs.

104. Continued vigilance was needed to oppose vigorously and unrelentingly the violations of the rights of the Palestinians under occupation. Those violations had increased since the advent of the intifada.

105. He called for an international condemnation of the continued human rights violations of the Palestinian people. Publicizing those violations remained one of the unique roles of NGOs.

106. The NGOs and the ICCP had never been financially sound or secure. Efforts to raise funds from individual NGOs and other sources had met with mixed success. The global popular NGO movement had persisted out of the dedication of the individual NGO members.

107. The NGO movement had progressed over the past decade. In the future the focus would shift from self-determination and human rights to include economic and human development in Palestine.

108. **Mr. Zehdi Terzi** (Palestinian), Advisor to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, stated that Israel had persistently maintained a negative attitude towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based even-handedly on the security of Israel and the attainment and exercise of the rights of the Palestinian people.

109. He foresaw the future role of Israeli NGOs as that of alerting Israeli public opinion to the fact that Israel's security came first and foremost from within. Israeli NGOs should demand an immediate halt to the economic stranglehold on the occupied Palestinian territory and an end to the dismemberment of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and the isolation of Jerusalem.

110. He said that the major role of the Palestinian NGOs in the occupied Palestinian territory was to keep the world regularly and accurately informed about the policies and practices of the occupying power, Israel. He advised the Palestinian NGOs to carry out feasibility studies before the inception of any economic project and then to address such projects to their counterparts in Europe, North America and elsewhere. Consultations on those projects should be carried out fully at a local level and with the appropriate departments of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

111. The ICCP could act as a clearing house for projects and as a coordinator to channel funding in the form of NGO contributions towards appropriate destinations. In that regard, he indicated that the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights, should support in concrete and tangible terms, including financial, the maintenance and continued functioning of the ICCP office.

112. He expressed appreciation for the increased assistance from the Member States of the European Community, collectively and individually. On the other hand he lamented the drying up of funds from some States and from United Nations agencies. He hoped that the ECCP would continue its much appreciated endeavours to secure funds for Palestinian projects in the occupied territory.

113. He called on the expatriate Palestinian community to invest directly in those projects. He also called on the Palestine Liberation Organization to give priority to investment in income-generating projects for the benefit of the Palestinian people living under occupation.

Closing Statements

114. **Mr. Don Betz** (United States of America), said that the deliberations of the past three days had been of a very high calibre. He referred to a message addressed to the International Conference of War Victims being held in Geneva, in which the NGOs had reminded the Conference of its responsibility vis-a-vis the question of Palestine under international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

115. He thanked and commended the panelists for their research and presentations. The NGOs, he said, had also paid close attention to the theme of the Meeting. A number of ideas for constructive change and positive collaboration between the NGOs and the United Nations had been discussed.

116. The occasion of the tenth anniversary was a time for reflection. He expressed appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and thanked the Division for Palestinian Rights.

117. In conclusion, he thanked the Government of Austria, which had, every other year, for several years, hosted the International NGO Meeting at the Austria Conference Center.

118. **Rev. Ibrahim Ayyad** (Palestinian), President of the Palestine Committee for NGOs, in his closing statement said that the agenda for the Palestinian track of the negotiations was still not clear and that the United States and Israel were cooperating to leave certain points of discussion purposely obscure.

119. In his view, the United States was not impartial and there was a growing feeling among Arab delegates that they were dealing, not with Israel and the United States, but with Israel's friends in the United States.

120. He observed that the recently submitted American position paper had been very close to the Israeli position and had greatly diverged from the Palestinian expectations

on very important and essential issues such as Jerusalem and the territorial integrity of the occupied territories.

121. Non-governmental organizations were the enlightened conscience of their states and peoples. They had worked hard to promote awareness of the justice of the cause of the Palestinian people and had "succeeded greatly".

122. **H. E. M. Kebá Birane Cissé** (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, concluded by saying that their deliberations, discussions and proposals throughout the last three days had significantly contributed to a deeper and broader understanding that would support international efforts to achieve the internationally recognized inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

123. The Committee felt that the continuation of the peace process and the focus on it by the international community may have brought the Committee's objectives a step closer. However, the mobilization of public opinion was now more vital than ever in light of the conditions faced by the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, which had dramatically deteriorated, together with the continued violations of human rights and of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

124. In conclusion, the Chairman warned that there remained some difficulties ahead. He commended the NGOs for their energy, capacity and determination. He assured them of the Committee's support and collaboration in pursuance of its mandate. He thanked all the participants for their commitment and constructive contributions. He also expressed particular appreciation to the Palestinians and Israelis who had come to share their concerns and hopes for the future.

Annex I

TENTH UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Austria Center, Vienna, Austria
25-27 August 1993

FINAL DECLARATION

1. We, the Non-Governmental Organizations gathered at the Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine are aware that we have convened at a critical moment in the struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom and statehood.

2. We unconditionally affirm the right of the Palestinian people to return, self-determination and statehood. We affirm our conviction that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State alongside Israel is the most suitable means for securing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

3. We call upon the Israeli government and people to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to statehood, and to security within their homeland and the right of Palestinian refugees to return thereby assuring the mutual recognition of the equal rights of both peoples. We demand the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories.

4. We support the peace process which began in Madrid in 1991 under the sponsorship of the United States of America and the former Soviet Union as an attempt to reach a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace. However, many obstacles have inhibited the success of this process. We affirm that any negotiating process leading to peace not only requires the recognition of the principles found in these resolutions as the basis for negotiation, but also requires the direct participation of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the effective participation of the United Nations and the inclusion of the European Community as co-sponsor. It is our conviction that the principles embodied in the call for the United Nations Peace Conference on the Middle East must be honoured in order to establish a just and lasting peace. We believe the lack of progress to date of the peace process is the direct responsibility of the Government of Israel with the support of the United States.

5. We consider it most urgent that the United Nations provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinians under occupation. We call upon Israel to immediately recognize the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to all the territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem. The guarantees and protection of the Convention must be recognized and implemented without delay. We call upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva

Convention to apply sanctions to ensure Israel's compliance with the provisions of that convention.

6. We express our full support for the ongoing intifadah which constitutes the Palestinian people's inherent right to resist colonization and military occupation, consequently, Israel's efforts to suppress the intifadah are illegitimate.

Further, we urge that NGOs concerned with protection for the Palestinians should establish permanent monitoring and witness groups in the occupied territories in order to enhance public awareness and to pressure governments to urge Israel to end the occupation.

We condemn Israel's occupation and colonization of the Golan Heights, continuing brutal occupation of Southern Lebanon, and its flagrant violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention in those regions.

7. We denounce the Israeli Government settlements policy in the West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights and the increased settlement activities in occupied East Jerusalem. These settlements are illegal and in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and United Nations Security Council resolution 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980 and other relevant Security Council resolutions and should be dismantled. We strongly protest against the United States administration's decision to grant Israel $10 billion in loan guarantees without any pledge from the Israeli government that it will cease building settlements which are illegal in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. We do not accept the distinction between political and security settlements offered by the Israeli government as it appears to be a tactic to avoid returning all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, and remains an obstacle to peace. We call upon all governments not to donate or pledge any financial or other support to Israel until it officially pledges to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem and in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

8. We demand the implementation of the right of the Palestinians displaced since 1967 to return to their homes. In this context, we affirm the right of families to be reunited and to remain together in their homeland. We also call for the immediate return of all Palestinian deportees.

9. We note that in spite of United Nations Security Council resolution 799 (1992) of 18 October 1992, the expellees of December 1992 remain in exile in Lebanon. We condemn this arrogant refusal to observe this demand by the Security Council for their return. We call upon the Security Council to implement this resolution by taking all necessary measures to insure that immediate and safe return of the expellees and their protection against arbitrary arrest and detention.

10. We also call upon Israel to recognize the rights of Palestinians who are citizens of Israel to full equality, rights for which they have been struggling since 1948. We denounce the ongoing discrimination against Palestinians who are citizens of Israel. We condemn the Israeli confiscation of their lands which has recently been accelerated and the denial of legal municipal recognition to many Palestinian villages and communities in Israel. The national and human rights of the Palestinians who are citizens of Israel must be considered in any further comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem.

11. We express our solidarity with Israeli peace forces struggling for the equality of all citizens of Israel and for an end to Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem and for the realization of the right of self determination for the Palestinian people.

12. We strongly condemn the continuing Israeli policy of systematic iron fist repression against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory. We point out that at least 14,000 Palestinians remain imprisoned, although some have fully served the terms of their sentences.

13. We condemn the summary executions carried out by the undercover army units in the occupied Palestinian territory. We demand that all operations as well as all standing orders and regulations relating to the undercover army units be cancelled and that the so-called "special units" be disbanded immediately.

14. We demand that Israel rescind all standing military orders that have codified human rights abuses and legalized them, particularly military orders that sanction administrative detention, restrictions of fundamental freedoms and rights such as free speech, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movement and travel, academic freedom, excessive taxation and other severe restrictions on the free development of the economy and the society of the occupied Palestinian territories.

We demand Israeli authorities to stop the killing and injuring of civilians, collective punishment, the sealing and demolition of houses, detention, torture and imprisonment without trial, expropriation of land and water resources, the closing of educational institutions, curfews and restrictions on the free movements of Palestinians and call for the immediate end to these acts.

We further call upon Israel to rescind its illegal closures of the occupied Palestinian territory and to permit the freedom of movement of Palestinians within those territories with free access to occupied East Jerusalem. We call for the support of all believers for whom Jerusalem is a living center of their faiths to protect the presence of Muslims and Christians against Israeli efforts to annex Arab East Jerusalem.

15. We condemn Israel's recent massive aggression against Lebanon. We deplore the failure of the international community to take appropriate actions to protect the Lebanese and Palestinian civilians subjected to massive bombardment, displacement and dispossession. We call upon the Security Council to implement its Resolution 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978 requiring Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon.

16. We support comprehensive measures to control and eliminate weapons of mass destruction worldwide, especially in the Middle East. The international community should strongly urge Israel to sign and ratify the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. We are concerned about the risks to the natural environment which Israel's continued nuclear weapons programme poses. In this context NGOs are urged to support the campaign for Mordechai Vanunu's immediate release from the brutal and inhumane confinement he is suffering for alerting the world to the Israeli nuclear threat.

17. We address a call to all the countries, especially the Gulf countries, which have drastically reduced their support to Palestinian organizations to reexamine their position

and renew their support to the Palestinian people and its sole legitimate representative, the PLO.

18. We warmly thank the Committee for convening this international meeting and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee delegation. We extend a warm thanks to His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat including the interpreters who so valuably assisted us. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and added to our deliberations. We also address our appreciation to the Government of Austria for having generously hosted this Meeting.

19. We request the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its Forty-eighth Session as part of the Committee's report.

* * * * * *

PLAN OF ACTION

Considering that Israel is alone among the community of nations which does not recognize the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied in 1967, and thus continuing to refuse to conform its actions to the provision of that Convention;

Noting with grave concern Israel's continuing grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the Israeli military orders and regulations which legitimize these grave breaches and other gross and systematic violations of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem;

Noting the International Conference for the Protection of War victims taking place in Geneva on 27 and 28 August 1993, we resolve the following:

1. That the ICCP initiate a world-wide campaign on the governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental levels, aimed at securing Israel's acceptance of the legal applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to all the territories it occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem.

2. That ICCP today send an urgent message to the conveners of the International Conference on the Protection of War Victims, calling on States' delegates to the conference to resolve that Israel is bound by international law, especially by the UN Charter and its treaty obligations as a High Contracting Party to the Geneva Conventions, to implement the provision of the Convention as a matter of law in the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

3. That ICCP actively join the long-term efforts initiated during the June 1993 World Conference on Human Rights towards the establishment of a Permanent International Criminal Court, charged with adjudicating war crimes, crimes against humanity and gross systematic violations of human rights such as those occurring on a

daily basis in the occupied Palestinian Territories. The ICCP can get all necessary materials and cooperation from the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva.

Annex II

Message of the
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
PRESENTED BY
MR. JOHAN NORDENFELT
DIRECTOR
PROGRAMMES AGAINST APARTHEID
AND FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellency Ambassador Wolfgang Wolte,
Excellencies,
Distinguished panellists, guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine. It is an honour for me to address this very important audience and to pay special tribute to you, Ambassador Wolte, for the efforts you and your country have made in promoting international cooperation in the search for peace and justice, especially in the troubled region of the Middle East. Austria's devotion to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and its commitment to resolving the question of Palestine which would protect the legitimate rights and interests of all parties, is well known. In particular, the gracious decision of your Government to make once again available the facilities of the Austria Center for the holding of this Meeting is very much appreciated.

The convening of this Meeting on the question of Palestine, held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly,
is testimony to the concern with which the United Nations views the continuation of the stalemate in this long standing conflict, and the urgency it attaches to the need to promote a just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the principles of international law.

The presence here of non-governmental organizations from all parts of the world as well as personalities from Europe and other regions, together with Palestinians and Israelis, reaffirms the commitment of the international community as a whole to resolving the question of Palestine in a just and comprehensive manner, thereby contributing to the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East. Support for such a solution by all the participants in this Meeting is certain to make an important contribution to the peace talks which are taking place. It would also help mobilize public opinion in Europe and elsewhere in support of the peace process.

We cannot, however, fail to observe that while negotiations are under way, the situation on the ground continues to be volatile. The Secretary-General recently expressed his deep concern at the increase in violent incidents in which a number of

Palestinians and Israelis were killed and wounded in the occupied territories. He deplored these acts of violence and appealed to all sides for restraint. Moreover, the deterioration of economic conditions resulting from Israel's decision to close off the occupied territories, remains a matter of serious concern. The Secretary-General has also expressed concern at the recent Israeli operation in Southern Lebanon and its possible implications for the peace process.

In these circumstances, it is all the more imperative that efforts be intensified in pursuit of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, which will enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate political rights, including self-determination. The negotiations which were launched at Madrid almost two years ago, have been welcomed by the General Assembly as a significant step towards the achievement of peace and have heightened expectations that a solution to this protracted and tragic conflict may at long last be within reach. The Madrid process has received the support of the parties concerned and is taking place within the framework of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Despite the obstacles and delays which have occurred, the negotiations have shown that a substantive dialogue between the parties is possible.

Since last autumn, this process has been widened to include the United Nations as a full participant in the multilateral working groups on regional issues. The Secretary-General has named Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan, Under-Secretary-General and Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General to coordinate United Nations' involvement in the working groups; experts from a wide variety of United Nations agencies and programmes are now actively engaged in this process. Moreover, the Secretary-General has repeatedly voiced his commitment to do everything possible to help in the peace efforts and his readiness to offer the services of the United Nations if requested by the parties.

The Secretary-General firmly believes that, pending a political settlement, it is necessary to ensure the safety and protection of the civilian population of the occupied territories in accordance with numerous Security Council resolutions which have affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territories and have requested Israel to apply in full its provisions. In accordance with Security Council resolutions 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990, and 799 (1992), the Secretary-General has made persistent efforts to persuade Israel to comply with its international obligations in this regard.

Before concluding, I would like, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to recognize the tireless efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, thanks to which the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people are now better understood and supported. The Secretary-General extends his full support to the Committee in all its endeavours to promote international efforts so as to enable the Palestinian people to gain its legitimate rights, which have been recognized and reaffirmed by the General Assembly.

I wish all the participants success in their deliberations in this important International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine.

Thank you.

Annex III

Message of
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. YASSER ARAFAT
CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

PRESENTED BY
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. FAISAL AWEIDAH
PERMANENT OBSERVER OF PALESTINE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AND OTHER UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES IN VIENNA AND
AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear Friends,
Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings,

It is my pleasure, on the occasion of your tenth meeting, to express to you all, in the name of our Palestinian people, on behalf of my colleagues, members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and in my own name, our deep gratitude and profound appreciation for the significant and comprehensive efforts you are making in support of our Palestinian people in their just struggle for the establishment of a just peace, the termination of the Israeli occupation of their land and the restoration and exercise by our people of their inalienable national rights, including their right to return to their land, their right to self-determination and their right to establish their independent State, with the holy city of Jerusalem as its capital.

It is indeed a significant event which brings you together today: the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine. A decade has passed since the initiation of the good efforts which you deploy to explain the just Palestinian cause to your friendly societies. In that context, you have indeed brought about major achievements, which have led to an important contribution towards strengthening the foundations of the political process for the establishment of a just peace in the region and the provision of a just political solution to the Palestinian question based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolutions 242 and 338 and the Fourth Geneva Convention. We also greatly appreciate the physical and institutional support by NGOs in the various areas within the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem as well as in the Palestinian refugee camps, whether in the educational, health, social and economic areas or in the area of human rights. Many of you who are connected with NGOs have witnessed the Israeli policies as well as the plain Israeli violations of even the simplest human rights. You have been very active in defending the human and fundamental rights of our people against such ignominious and flagrant violations, which are still being committed by the Israeli occupation authorities. Hence, the noble actions which you

have undertaken, and are still undertaking, are always received with appreciation and gratitude by our Palestinian people and their leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization. We are full of hope that your efforts will continue to be made in the interest of a just peace. We are also confident that at this tenth meeting you will adopt the appropriate decision in favour of continuing your important and welcome actions.

I would also like to express our deep gratitude to the United Nations, to His Excellency the Secretary-General and to the Division for Palestinian Rights for the commendable efforts they exert in strengthening your actions as well as in supporting the just struggle of our Palestinian people for the establishment of a just peace.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

You are surely well aware that our Palestinian people have been subject to the most hideous forms of injustice, oppression and suppression by the Israeli occupation authorities and to the instrument of cruelty and violence in their possession, which they use daily and systematically against our people. The Palestinian people have been exposed to grave violations of their political and economic rights as a people. The Israeli Government has usurped and occupied their land by the force of arms, thereby preventing the people from exercising their fundamental right to self-determination in their territory. The human rights of the people are also being exposed to flagrant violations daily and systematically by the Israeli occupation authorities. Such violations include murder and mass killings, arrest and mass detentions, expulsion and mass deportations, the bombardment of quarters and houses with rockets and missiles, the confiscation of land and property, the uprooting of shrines and the prevention of the faithful from practising their religious rites in mosques and churches. Moreover, the living conditions of our people in Gaza and the West Bank have been gravely deteriorating, to the extent that the Gaza Strip is now suffering a real famine, the unemployed account for 60 per cent of the inhabitants and the number of Palestinian martyrs, particularly among children below the age of 12, who have fallen before the fire of the Israeli occupation forces has increased to an unprecedented degree, a fact which is confirmed by the Israeli human rights organizations themselves. In addition, the Israeli occupation authorities have been exercising a policy of isolation and siege in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, designed to starve our people and to deprive them of their livelihood.

These practices and policies adopted by Israel confirm the Israeli prevarication and convolution regarding the achievement of a just settlement of the Palestinian problem. They also confirm the denial by Israel of international customs, covenants and resolutions, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the relevant United Nations resolutions, and show that Israel is still pursuing its aggressive schemes and policies, despite the regional and international changes which stress the universality of human rights and their role in making those changes.

Mr. Chairman, Sisters and Brothers,

Although the peace negotiations on the Middle East and the Palestinian question,which started in Madrid in October 1991, are nearing the end of their second year, they have unfortunately reached deadlock. Hence, you are well aware, dear friends, of the importance of delivering the peace process from the critical situation

into which they have driven it. The causes of that critical situation consist of the attempt by Israel and, unfortunately, the United States Administration, to alter the bases and terms of reference upon which the peace process has rested since the Madrid Conference, and until the present. There are the initiative of President Bush as well as the two letters of invitation and assurances which provide for the principle of exchanging land for peace and the application of resolutions 242 and 338, that is to say, the withdrawal by Israel from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including the holy city of Jerusalem, the guarantee of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people and the guarantee of security for all in the region. The tenth round, however, has reached a dead end. The American Administration has sent two delegations to the region, one headed by Mr. Dennis Ross, and the second by Mr. Christopher, the Secretary of State. We were hoping for a breakthrough which would bring the negotiation process out of that dead end. But the United States Administration has submitted to us a paper which we have refused, because of the way in which that Administration has dealt with the issues raised, such as the exclusion of Jerusalem, the non-inclusion of the issue of settlements, the disagreement over geographical jurisdiction, the treatment of the occupied Palestinian territories and the early handing over of functions in the occupied territories. All that has not facilitated the creation of a climate which would advance the peace process, especially at a time when the economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories have been rapidly deteriorating because of the economic blockade and isolation imposed by Israel, as well as the financial blockade imposed on the PLO and the Palestinian people. Here we are embarking upon a new round of negotiations. We have therefore suggested a proposal to break this deadlock. It consists of an effective disengagement on the Palestinian front in Eriha and Gaza, in association with the solution in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, including the holy city of Jerusalem. We have also called for a direct dialogue between the PLO and the Israeli Government, as well as the resumption of the dialogue between the PLO and the United States Administration.

We are confident that you will continue to undertake your important actions and efforts in standing by our people in their just struggle for the establishment of a just peace through termination of the Israeli occupation, restoration to and exercise by our people of their inalienable national rights and the provision of economic support to our people in order to lift the siege and starvation imposed upon them.

I thank you and wish you every success in assuming your noble and humane tasks and in your effective solidarity with our Palestinian people.

Tunis, 18 August 1993.

Annex IV

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

Participant NGOs

ABNAA AL-BALAD ASSOCIATION (ROOTS)
ABNAA AL-BALAD MOVEMENT
AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY ORGANIZATION (AAPSO)
AKTION DRITTE WELT
AL-FIKR AL GADID
AL-HAQ
AL-MUJTAMA INSTITUTE
ALL-INDIA PEACE AND SOLIDARITY ORGANIZATION
ANTI-ZIONIST COMMITTEE OF THE SOVIET PUBLIC
ARAB ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT
ARAB COORDINATING COMMITTEE
ARAB INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION
ARAB LAWYERS UNION
ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ARAB WRITERS UNION IN ISRAEL
ARCI - CULTURA E SVILUPPO (ARCS)
ASSOCIATION: WORK, HEALTH, PEACE FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE
ASAMBLEA DE COOPERACIÓN POR LA PAZ
ASOCIACION DE AYUDA HUMANITARIA PARA EL PUEBLO PALESTINO (MAP-SPAIN)
ASSOCIATION FRANCE-PALESTINE (AFP)
ASSOCIATION MEDICALE FRANCO-PALESTINIENNE (AMFP)
ASSOCIATION OF FORTY
ASSOCIATION POUR L'UNION DES PEUPLES JUIF ET PALESTINIEN
ASSOCIATION SUISSE-PALESTINE (ASP)
BEIT HANINA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
BISAN CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
CAABU - COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ARAB-BRITISH UNDERSTANDING
CENTRE FOR DISSEMINATION OF ALTERNATIVE INFORMATION - PANORAMA
CHURCH OF HUMANISM
CIMADE - SERVICE OECUMÉNIQUE D'ENTRAIDE
[THE] COMPUTER MAGAZINE AND STATISTICAL REPORTS ON PALESTINIAN TECHNOLOGY
CYPRUS SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE WITH PALESTINE
DANISH-PALESTINIAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION (DPFA)
DEMOCRATIC ARAB PARTY
DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR PEACE AND EQUALITY - HADASH
DOWN WITH OCCUPATION
FINNISH ARAB FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

FRIENDS OF DETAINEES AND PRISONERS ASSOCIATION
FRIENDS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE
(FREUNDE DES PALAESTINENSISCHEN VOLKES)
FRIENDS OF THE PALESTINIAN UNIVERSITIES
FUND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE ARAB SECTOR OF ISRAEL
FUNDACIÓN ARGENTINA PARA EL TERCER MUNDO (FATEM)
GENERAL UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN (GUPW)
GERMAN-PALESTINIAN ASSOCIATION
(DEUTSCH-PALAESTINENSISCHE GESELLSCHAFT)
GREEK COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY
INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS POLITICOS PARA AMERICA LATINA Y AFRICA (IEPALA)
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS
INTERNATIONAL FORUM
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH AND STUDENT MOVEMENT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS (ISMUN)
JERUSALEM PRESS SERVICES
LATIN AMERICAN CENTRE OF WORKERS
(CONFEDERACIÓN LATINO AMERICANA DE TRABAJADORES)
LIGUE INTERNATIONALE POUR LES DROITS ET LA LIBERATION DES PEUPLES
MALAYSIA-PALESTINE SOLIDARITY AND FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION
(PERSATUAN SETIAKAWAN DAN PERSAHABATAN MALAYSIA-PALESTINE)
MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINIANS (MAP-UK)
MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINE (MAP-CANADA)
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK LAWYERS (USA)
NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR MENTAL HEALTH
NEAR EAST CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (NECEF)
PALESTINE GROUPS OF NORWAY
PALESTINE COMMITTEE OF NORWAY
PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY
PALESTINE SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION OF SWEDEN
PALESTINE STUDIES PROGRAM, UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
PRINCETON MIDDLE EAST SOCIETY
PRISONERS FRIENDS ASSOCIATION
SALAAM - CHILDREN OF THE OLIVE TREE
SOCIETY FOR AUSTRO-ARAB RELATIONS
SPANISH NGO COMMITTEE ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE
(COMITÉ ESPAÑOL DE ONG SOBRE LA CUESTIÓN PALESTINA)
TRUST PROGRAMS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION
UMNO YOUTH - MALAYSIA
UNION OF PALESTINIAN MEDICAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN COMMITTEE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES
UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF EGYPT
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM (WILPF)
WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (WFTU)
WORLD PEACE COUNCIL (WPC)
WORLD YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION (WORLD YWCA)

Observer NGOs

EL BATTOUF AGRICULTURE SOCIETY
NORTH-SOUTH XXI INSTITUTE
NORWAC
PORTUGUESE PEACE COUNCIL
SOLIDARIDAD, DESARROLLO Y PAZ (SODEPAZ)
UNION OF LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE UNORGANIZED VILLAGES

Regional Coordinating Committees
on the Question of Palestine

EUROPEAN COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NGOS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE (ECCP)

Bernard Mills

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NGOS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE (ICCP)

Don Betz
Kathy Bergen

LATIN AMERICAN COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NGOS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE (LACCP)

José Felix Ferreyra

PALESTINE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NGOS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Rev. Ibrahim Ayad
Abdulrahman Marai

Panelists

Haidar ABDEL SHAFI (Palestinian), Leader of the Palestinian Delegation to the Peace Talks

Hussein ABU HUSSEIN (Israel), Advocate

Mohammed ALI TAHA (Israel), Secretary, Association of Arab Writers

Naseer ARURI (United States of America), Professor of Political Science, University of Massachusetts

Don BETZ (United States of America), Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine

Romesh CHANDRA (India), Honorary President, World Peace Council

Naomi CHAZAN (Israel), Member of the Knesset

Ruth COHEN (Israel), Member, Association of Women

Avigdor FELDMAN (Israel) Human rights lawyer

Fritz FROEHLICH (Austria), Network of European NGOs in the Occupied Territories (NENGOOT)

Jim GRAFF (Canada), President, Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada

Samiha KHALIL (Palestinian), President, Society of In'Ash El-Usra

Hans-Peter KOTTHAUS, Chief, External Relations Office, UNRWA, Vienna

Jean-Marie LAMBERT (France), Association Medicale Franco-Palestinienne

Raji SOURANI (Palestinian), Director, Gaza Center for Rights and Law

Zehdi L. TERZI (Palestinian), Advisor to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Akira URIU, Senior Area Programme Officer and Focal Point for Technical Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNIDO

Pablo de la VEGA (Ecuador), Co-founder of the Ecuadorian Chapters of Amnesty International and the Defense of Children International (DCI)

Adrien F. WING (United States of America), International Section Chair of the National Conference of Black Lawyers

Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, New York
Chairman of the Committee and Head of the Delegation

H.E. Sr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, New York
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

H.E. Mr. A.G. Ravan Farhadi
Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, New York
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Joseph Cassar
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York
Rapporteur of the Committee

Mr. M. Nasser Al Kidwa
Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations, New York

Government observers

Afghanistan
Austria
China

Egypt
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Lebanon
Mexico
Nigeria
Saudi Arabia
Slovak Republic
Spain
Sudan
Tunisia
Yemen

United Nations Bodies and Specialized Agencies

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Hans Peter Kotthaus
Yves Besson
Claire Grimes
Füsün Türkkan

United Nations International Development Organization (UNIDO)

Akira Uriu

Intergovernmental Organizations

Organization of the Islamic Conference

H.E. Mr. Abdelaziz Aboughoosh
Ambassador
Director of Jerusalem and Palestine Department
in the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Organizations having received a standing invitation to participate in the session and the work of the General Assembly as observers and maintaining permanent offices at Headquarters

Palestine

H.E. Mr. Faisal Aweidah
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Palestine
to the United Nations Office
and Agencies
at Vienna

Mr. Adel Saadi
Press Officer
Permanent Office of Palestine
to the United Nations Office
at Vienna

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